

## SEPA IWG: Guidelines for Voting

7/23/2008

The purpose of this document is to provide some clarity about how the SEPA IWG will conduct voting, when necessary, to come to resolution on an issue. The SEPA IWG requested such a document at its July 8 meeting.

Products and recommendations developed by the SEPA IWG will ideally have a broad base of support among members, and we are likely to expend significant effort identifying solutions that reflect the preferences of most if not all of the members. However, the SEPA IWG is not required to reach consensus on proposals for the CAT. To make progress and deliver specific proposals to the CAT under a tight time schedule, the group may, at times, need to vote according to the procedures described below. The objective of these procedure is to : to “ensure that the majority of IWG members support the final policy proposal sent to the full CAT, and document reasons why there might be different opinions on the proposal, if needed” (IWG Roles & Responsibilities).

Short of voting, the co-leads or facilitator will initiate activities intended to get a “sense of the group,” such as informal polling of members. These efforts won’t follow the procedures described below. They will be intended to identify areas where there is (or is not) rough group consensus and to focus the SEPA IWG on key areas for discussion and analysis.

The points below describe the procedures that will be followed prior to, during, and after voting.

Prior to any voting,

- Members will be alerted before the meeting in which voting will take place that a vote on a particular topic may occur; this will generally be done through a reference in the meeting or teleconference agenda.
- To the extent feasible, voting will be preceded by discussion or analysis intended to identify the range of possible options to be voted on. The co-leads will determine which options are being voted on.
- The co-leads will determine when a vote is appropriate and will initiate the voting process.

During a vote,

- SEPA IWG members in attendance (or their designated alternates), will be asked to indicate their preference among two or more possible options.
- Votes will be counted and recorded for each option.

Following a vote,

- The outcomes of the vote, including all votes cast for each option, will be part of the information provided with proposals delivered to the CAT.
- IWG members will have the opportunity to provide written descriptions and rationales for all majority and minority proposals delivered to the CAT.
- Where the SEPA IWG needs to move forward based on a vote, it will move forward on the option with the most votes.

The following guidelines, drawn from the IWG “Roles and Responsibilities,” will be observed:

- Designated alternates may vote in place of members. (Note that the Roles and Responsibilities say “It is expected that alternatives will not be routinely utilized and that alternatives will be current with information developed by the process and able to make decisions.”)
- All IWG members (or their alternates) are eligible to vote, but votes will be counted only from those in attendance (by phone or in person) when a vote is taken.
- IWG members or alternates in attendance can abstain from voting. This information will be included in the record of the vote outcome.